

Aviation Safety, the military had more than 6,000 noncombat aviation accidents since 2013, destroying 157 aircraft, at a cost of \$9.41 billion. Even worse was the human cost. There are 198 souls that have been lost in these tragic accidents, affecting hundreds more spouses, children, family, and friends.

When asked why these causes occurred, servicemembers pointed to inadequate training programs, risky maintenance practices, and spotty funding, among other reasons. Alabama is home to Fort Rucker, where every Army helicopter pilot comes to get their training. When I visited the folks at Fort Rucker, they told me about the very real need for increased flight training hours for our pilots, which requires more investment and prioritization in the defense budget.

This last week, two pilots were injured in a helicopter crash at Fort Rucker during flight training. I am sure General Francis and the U.S. Army safety center will do a thorough investigation and provide feedback on the improvements needed to ensure that this does not happen again. The safety of our flight program must be a top priority. We must listen to our men and women in uniform and invest in the proper training and safety measures that will prevent these crashes.

Alabama stands ready to continue to build our military so we can maintain our status as a preeminent fighting force in the world. We have got hundreds of contractors and more than 200,000 employed in the defense sector across the State of Alabama. These topnotch men and women support our military installations from shipbuilders in Mobile to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, and many places in between. As Winston Churchill said, "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

We are willing and able, but those tools require sustained funding from the Federal Government. Telling our forces to fight a war with outdated tools is like giving a football team some leather helmets and decades-old poorly fitted pads and expecting them to compete against modern equipment. But that is exactly what President Biden's defense budget is asking our military to do. Frankly, it is a huge disappointment, coming from our Commander in Chief. We cannot let our men and women down.

Thankfully, it is Congress—not the President—which has the power of the purse. And, really, this should be our first order of business every year. It is that important.

In the coming weeks, I will be working with my colleagues on the National Defense Authorization Act and budget that will enable our military to do the job better today and prepare for all the challenges tomorrow. This debate is ultimately about whether or not we have the willpower to fight to defend our way of life and our great country.

Well, I am willing to keep fighting for the United States by investing in

the men and women who keep us safe. I urge my colleagues and President Biden to do the same.

REMEMBERING CURTIS T. SPROUSE

Madam President, finally, I want to take a moment to honor the life of a great person in Alabama, a war veteran—Curtis T. Sprouse.

Mr. Sprouse joined the U.S. Army in 1943 at the age of 17. He served in the 318th Infantry Regiment under General George Patton in the European theater, including the Battle of the Bulge. For his bravery, he earned the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Good Conduct Medal, among other honors.

He passed away in Dothan, AL, last week at the age of 98.

A year ago, I visited with Mr. Sprouse at a restaurant in Dothan, and we sat at a table known locally as the "table of knowledge." It is where locals have sat and talked for decades, where people are said to solve the world's problems with conversation. That day, Mr. Sprouse and I talked about his service, and I talked to him about my father's time, who at the same age today would be 98. We talked about World War II. We didn't end up solving the world's problems, but we did talk about how to humbly, graciously, and patriotically serve our great country.

Mr. Sprouse was a humble man, but it was men like him who defended our country and the world from evil. And, ultimately, they prevailed. We owe Mr. Sprouse a debt of gratitude we can never fully repay.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary work of the teachers in Arkansas and across the country.

As we prepare to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, it is clear that educators are in a class by themselves when it comes to resilience. Over the last 12 months, they have shown us what it means to be selfless and brave at a time when both were critically necessary.

I am especially proud of teachers in Arkansas who rose to the challenge of leading classes 100 percent virtually for the first time and then embraced reopening our schools in August 2020. The sudden transition to virtual learning was an extraordinary hurdle, as educators had to learn new technology and new teaching techniques overnight.

For all of us who have learned to use Zoom, it is worth taking a moment to imagine an online classroom with 30 wiggling first graders who want to show you their pets, or that you are teaching calculus to high school students who are preparing for an AP exam while attending class from their car at a Wi-Fi hotspot. Somehow, with great creativity and dedication, teachers embraced this mission and continued to do everything they could to reach each child.

When Arkansas schools reopened in the fall, they were faced with a tremen-

dous new challenge, from masks and social distancing to teaching classes, where some students were at their desks and others were on the screen. Arkansas teachers, once again, did the impossible for their students.

Over the last year, I have heard from educators who worried for their own health and safety but said their dedication to their students was stronger than fear. They learned new skills literally overnight, overhauled the curriculum, and reimagined every aspect of their classroom to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. Somehow, they also made our kids feel safe—safe enough to learn, set an example with their positive attitudes, and let students know how important they were, whether in the classroom or on a computer screen.

As they worked to maintain the academic progress of each child, they also provided a lifeline in an otherwise chaotic time. It is amazing to see the smiles on faces of the kids when they see their teachers. Even though nothing was normal, they gave students an escape back to normalcy by being there and continuing to do what they do best—teach.

When we look back at the heroes of this tumultuous time, it is clear that teachers will be among those we honor as society's most valuable players.

On behalf of the people of Arkansas, I want to thank our teachers for the great work that they have done this year and every year to bring out the best in each child and pave the way to a brighter future.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, we are less than 100 days into the Biden administration, and already we can identify a pattern in how they are building their policy initiatives, interacting with Congress, and marketing their ideas to the American people. In every example, the governing rule can be boiled down to "what you see isn't what you are going to get."

So far, in this 117th Congress, every single major policy proposal that DC Democrats have forced into the spotlight has been based on a false premise. They have intentionally misled the American people and are now catering to the increasingly radical leftwing that gets further out of step with the rest of this country each and every passing day.

Consider last month's absurd \$1.9 trillion spending package. The Democrats billed this as "the American Rescue Plan" and "COVID relief," but only 9 percent—9 percent—of the total package pricetag went for testing, vaccinations, and healthcare jobs. The rest